

Monday 15th October

Afghanistan

Pop: 36.4 million

The Afghan people have suffered greatly from over thirty years of conflict both from internal factions and external groups. A devastating civil war, followed by the oppressive rule of the Taliban, an extremist Islamic group, has created a society where over half the population has known nothing but war. These conflicts left over a million dead, an estimated 4 million children orphaned and approximately 2.5 million refugees.



Even though the Taliban were driven out and a democratic government established between 2002 and 2004, corruption remains rampant, and the still-prominent Taliban and tribal warlords continue to destabilise the nation. The government has struggled to rebuild its infrastructure and continues to rely heavily on foreign aid. With one of the world's lowest living standards, most live in poverty and over half lack access to clean water. Additionally, Afghanistan's destructive opium production is the highest in the world. These harsh conditions contribute to a life expectancy of only fifty years and a population where 40% are under the age of fourteen.

Under the oppressive Taliban reign (1996-2001), girls were often forced to marry as children, could not receive an education or be employed, were required to wear a full burqa in public, and could not leave the house unless accompanied by a male chaperone. Though conditions for women have improved, they remain a particularly vulnerable part of society.

Watch a video of this country [here](#)

- Let's pray for God's kingdom to come in this country.
- Pray for solutions to the threats of violence and for the political stability needed for a healthy economy and a just government.
- Ask for peace, protection and reconciliation in this beautiful country so torn apart by rivalry, revenge and unforgiveness.

Source: <http://prayercast.com/afghanistan.html>

Tuesday 16th October

Religion

Muslim: 99.9%

Afghanistan has been ranked 2nd this year by Open Doors on its list of the world's most difficult countries to live as a Christian. There, any belief contrary to Islam is illegal. Converting from Islam to Christianity can result in death. If a family member is known to have converted, their own family could kill them, have them arrested and put in prison or a mental hospital. Believers have to gather and worship in secret.

Yet extremist violence has caused many Muslims to question their faith. Though impossible to



document, it is undeniable that the Church is growing and Muslims are turning to Christ. Some have encountered Jesus in dreams and visions; others have heard the gospel through Christian radio. Christian relief agencies also manifest the love of God through meeting the nation's immense physical needs. Some of these humanitarian workers have even died as martyrs. But amid great persecution, there are growing numbers of believers in Afghanistan today!

Listen to a beautiful song called Reckless Love by Cory Asbury: <https://vimeo.com/268627618>

- The words of the worship song declare 'there is no mountain you won't climb up.... no lie you won't tear down coming after me.' Thank God for his reckless love for all Afghan people. Let's pray for many to respond to His love.
- Pray for protection over Afghan believers and for perseverance despite suffering, so they remain faithful, despite the pressure from family and friends and despite the threat to their lives.

Source of some material: <https://prayercast.com/afghanistan.html>

Wednesday 17th October

At the end of January this year, attackers targeted a military university located in the heart of Kabul, killing 11 soldiers and wounding 16 others.

The attack came after a weekend bombing on a crowded street in Kabul. More than 100 people were killed and over 200 injured, when members of the Taliban detonated an ambulance packed with explosives near a major hospital.

The week before, on January 20th, a 15-hour siege at the Intercontinental Hotel, the largest hotel in Kabul, killed 22 people, most of whom were foreigners working for an Afghan airline.

These assaults mark one of the most violent periods in Afghanistan's 16-year war. They are reminders that, in spite of the government's efforts, security is elusive. Attacks have intensified, striking locations that were previously considered safe. And Kabul's residents are terrified.

As the Taliban and ISIS claim more lives in this vulnerable country, we ask God to pour out His mercy on Afghan families.

Peace may seem like a distant hope for Afghanistan, but God is moving. Frontiers workers in nearby countries report that Afghan refugees are more open to the gospel than ever before. Dozens of Muslim-background Afghans have become followers of Jesus Christ and their numbers are multiplying.

Please join us in praying for Afghanistan.

- Ask the Lord to bring the peace, reconciliation, healing and hope of Christ to all the peoples of this nation.
- Ask God to send more labourers into the harvest to bring the gospel of peace to Afghanistan's 72 unreached Muslim people groups.
- Praise God that Afghan refugees are hearing and receiving the gospel message. Pray that many more Afghans put their trust in the eternal hope and security that cannot be shaken.

Thursday 18th October

Pashtun Taliban Members

Afghan society is made up of many different tribal groups. Each individual Afghan group, defined in either religious, geographical, tribal or kinsman terms considers itself autonomous and greatly dislikes outside interference. This has led to a culture of resistance to outside authority and inter-tribal and inter-group feuding.

Much of the reason for the fighting lies in the Pashtunwali, the traditional code of the Pashtuns. Among its requirements is badal (revenge). This revenge, even if it takes generations, has led to blood feuds being passed on from father to son. The Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group; they are a tribal people, Sunni Muslims and live largely in the south of the country. They make up a large part of the Taliban members.

This article is from Global Prayer Digest:

"A lone man trudges the rugged mountain trail. He keeps his beard bushy and long. His head hair is close shaven. He travels into the Taliban region along the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Yet he is not a Taliban. In fact he is no longer a Muslim, though he was born to that faith. He is a Muslim-background believer. God has called him to evangelize the Taliban. He knows it can cost him his life. Still, he makes his regular rounds—carrying a few New Testaments and other materials. He follows the promptings of the Holy Spirit in deciding when to witness and when to give a New Testament. While he has suffered, he has not yet been killed.

This man seeks to penetrate the immense spiritual barrier to Christ formed by the Taliban. The Taliban is an organization that immediately brings to mind pictures in the media of suicide bombs, rockets landing in markets, and rigid defiance of any effort to modify its extreme version of Islam."

- Pray that God will humble the Taliban leader, as he did Nebuchadnezzar centuries ago.
- Pray for the brave evangelist who treks the Taliban region, that God will protect him and use him to lead Taliban members to faith in Christ.
- Pray that they will seek and find the true Deliverer. Ask the Holy Spirit to penetrate the hearts of Taliban members so many will turn from a life of revenge to a life of peace and forgiveness.

Source of some material: <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/issue/day/pashtun-taliban-members/>
<https://www.about-afghanistan.com/afghanistan-peoples.html>

Friday 19th October

The following account is from Susan, a Frontiers worker in Afghanistan:

I work in a training school that runs courses for marginalised Muslim women. It allows them to learn a skill to help them to earn a living and not be a burden on their families.

I came to Afghanistan about five years ago. I grew up in a Christian family in the north of England. At the age of 13, at church one Sunday, I was given a prophecy that I would go to work in a country where no one else wanted to go. In my late teens and early twenties, I went away from God, before returning to the church. There I remembered the prophecy, but resisted the call. I heard a speaker talking about Afghanistan and then this country just kept cropping up wherever I went! I then heard about Frontiers and knew this was the means to go.

Meanwhile in Afghanistan, the manager of a training school was praying for someone to come and manage one side of the business. My qualification was quite an ordinary one for the UK, but in Afghanistan it was the perfect fit.

Recently we had a group of ten Muslim women attending their training course. A Muslim background believer (MBB) Aiza, would bring them.

During my class I was suddenly called to go to a different room and pray for a lady called Zoya. She had collapsed with a seizure. My heart sank. I was feeling tired and low and felt I had had nothing I could offer. Reluctantly I went, asking a good Muslim friend to come with me. She wasn't a believer but I trusted her to translate exactly what I said.

As I prayed, Zoya's rigid muscles began to relax. I asked Zoya how often she had these seizures. She said she had suffered from them for many years, often once or twice a month. She had visited a doctor but they hadn't improved. I felt God prompting me to share about Jesus, that only He could heal her. As I prayed for Zoya's complete healing, I also prayed that God would stir in her heart.

About two months later, Aiza's husband Tarif, also a MBB, came to see us. He told us that Zoya's father had visited him and told him that Zoya had not had any more seizures and was much happier. Now he wanted to know all about Jesus. As the father and head of the household, this meant the whole family was now going to hear the gospel message, as Aiza and Tarif were now able to share the good news with them!

- Praise God that Zoya's family are hearing the gospel message. Let's pray for softened hearts to accept the gift of eternal life and for them to be the bearers of the Good News to their neighbours and friends.
- We thank God for Susan and her willingness to count the cost, working in this country to reach marginalised Muslim women. Pray for more workers to go with a heart for marginalised Afghans.
- Despite feeling inadequate, Susan prayed for Zoya. Let us pray with confidence for many other Afghan women to come to know Jesus who is the only true friend we can ever have,

because He's ever dependable and reliable, He never sleeps, He never slumbers, He never disappoints, He is ever present in time of need.

"You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." John 15:14-15.

Saturday 20th October

Shughni – an unreached people group. Pop: 42,000 Islam: 99.9%

Our worker in Afghanistan knows a couple who work with the Shughni people group. This group is classified as unreached as there are so few followers of Jesus, but this is slowly changing. The couple are studying the Bible with them and trying to find people of peace.

They are a hard people group to reach, partly because of where they live and partly because of their long association with Islam.



The Shughni are part of the Tajik people group, who live in the hills and mountain slopes in the north and northeast of the country. They have a traditional way of life. Some are a nomadic people, many of them working as shepherds. Others are craftsmen, making a living from woodworking, weaving, pottery, blacksmithing and basket-making. While the men herd the animals, the women farm the land and are responsible for the home.

The Shughni are Shia Muslims. Since the eleventh century, they have belonged to the Ismaili sect of Islam. This religious group follows the Aga Khan and is also known as the "Seveners." They believe that important cosmic and historical events occur in series of seven. Their doctrine is very secretive and private, understood by the "select few." They do not have mosques or official clerics, but private houses of prayer and travelling clergy are numerous.

There are Christian audio recordings available in their language and a Bible translation, but more efforts are needed to reach and disciple them.

- Praise God for workers who are willing to go to remote places and the Shughni people to reach them with the gospel. Pray for wisdom and favour for them as they look for people of peace in this community.
- Nothing is impossible with God. No-one is beyond his reach. Prayer moves His hand. Let's pray for God to impact Shughni people in a mighty way so they shout God's praises from the mountain tops.

Source of some material: https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/14921/AF